

PHILBY (SCHEDULED)

BY RICHARD NORSWORTHY

LONDON, OCT. 1 (REUTERS)--TWO BRITISH NEWSPAPERS TODAY TOLD OF AN "UNMATCHED SUCCESS STORY IN ESPIONAGE"--A RUSSIAN AGENT WHO NEARLY BECAME CHIEF OF BRITISH INTELLIGENCE.

THE OBSERVER AND SUNDAY TIMES SAID BRITISH-BORN KIM PHILBY, NOW 56 AND LIVING IN MOSCOW SINCE FLEEING FROM BEIRUT, LEBANON, IN 1963, WAS ASSIGNED BY THE RUSSIANS IN 1934 TO INFILTRATE BRITISH INTELLIGENCE.

THE SUNDAY TIMES SAID THAT BY 1941 PHILBY PENETRATED THE SECRET SERVICE AND BY 1944 WAS HEADING THE BRITISH ANTI-RUSSIAN INTELLIGENCE OPERATION.

THE OBSERVER SAID HE WAS SENT TO WASHINGTON IN 1949 TO LIAISE AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL WITH THE NEWLY-FORMED CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (C.I.A.), THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION AND OTHER AMERICAN AGENCIES--AND THE MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION WENT THROUGH HIM.

THE END FINALLY CAME IN 1961 WHEN A HIGH RUSSIAN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER DEFECTED TO THE WEST AND LONDON LEARNED THE TRUTH ABOUT PHILBY.

THE BRITISH FOREIGN OFFICE TODAY REFUSED TO COMMENT ON THE REPORTS. A SPOKESMAN SAID IT NEVER COMMENTED ON MATTERS OF THIS NATURE.

BOTH NEWSPAPER REPORTS FOLLOWED THE RETURN FROM MOSCOW OF PHILBY'S ELDEST SON, JOHN, 24. HE SAID HE DELIVERED A LETTER FROM THE SUNDAY TIMES TO HIS FATHER, WHO NOW WORKS FOR A MOSCOW PUBLISHING HOUSE.

YOUNG PHILBY SAID HIS FATHER WAS NOT COOPERATING WITH THE NEWSPAPERS IN PUBLISHING ACCOUNTS OF HIS CAREER.  
(MORE) RP IM/RP 12:54P

FIRST ADD LONDON PHILBY X X X CAREER.

JOHN PHILBY ALSO SAID IN A RADIO INTERVIEW THE REPORTS WERE NOT PUBLISHED WITH HIS COOPERATION, ALTHOUGH THE SUNDAY TIMES SHOWED PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE ELDER PHILBY IN MOSCOW AND SAID THEY WERE TAKEN BY HIS SON.

PHILBY FLED TO RUSSIA IN 1963 FROM BEIRUT, WHERE HE WAS WORKING FOR THE OBSERVER AND ALSO, ACCORDING TO THAT PAPER, FOR BRITISH INTELLIGENCE.

HE LEFT THE SECRET SERVICE IN 1951 FORCED OUT BY THE BACKWASH OF THE DEFECTION OF BRITISH DIPLOMATS GUY BURGESS AND DONALD MACLEAN.

THE OBSERVER SAID THAT DESPITE PROMISES TO THE CONTRARY, PHILBY WAS BACK ON THE SECRET SERVICE BOOKS WHILE ACTING AS ITS BEIRUT CORRESPONDENT.

THE PAPERS SAID PHILBY RISKED EXPOSURE IN 1951 BY ALERTING MACLEAN, LATER REVEALED TO BE A MAJOR SPY, THAT HE WAS ABOUT TO BE INTERROGATED.

THE ENSUING SCANDAL CAUSED HIM TO FALL FROM GRACE, ONLY TO BE RESTORED WHEN THE FOREIGN SECRETARY--AND LATER PRIME MINISTER--HAROLD MACMILLAN CLEARED HIM UNEQUIVOCALLY BEFORE PARLIAMENT. THE NEXT YEAR, 1956, HE WAS ASSIGNED TO BEIRUT.

(MORE) IM/RP 12:57P

SECOND ADD LONDON PHILBY X X X BEIRUT.

THE SUNDAY TIMES SAID THAT WITH PHILBY'S SENSITIVE POSITION IN BRITISH INTELLIGENCE AND AS CONTACT MAN WITH THE C.I.A., HE HAD ALMOST TOTAL KNOWLEDGE OF ALL WESTERN INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS AGAINST RUSSIA.

THE OBSERVER, CALLING IT "AN UNMATCHED SUCCESS STORY IN ESPIONAGE," SAID PHILBY WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT SPY THE RUSSIANS EVER HAD IN THE WEST.

"HIS CLIMB (IN THE SECRET SERVICE) WAS SO RAPID AND HIS COVER SO GOOD, THAT AT ONE POINT HE WAS TIPPED TO BECOME HEAD OF MI6, BRITAIN'S SECRET INTELLIGENCE SERVICE," THE OBSERVER SAID.

THE NEWSPAPER SAID IT ALL STARTED AT CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY IN THE EARLY 1930S, WHEN MANY GRADUATE OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS WERE QUESTIONING THE VALUES OF THEIR CLASS AND THEIR COUNTRY.

HE BECAME IMMERSSED IN LEFTWING UNIVERSITY POLITICS AND FLIRTED WITH THE COMMUNIST PARTY, BUT NEVER JOINED IT. THE PAPER SAID HIS REAL POLITICAL EDUCATION BEGAN IN AUSTRIA WHEN HE WAS 22 YEARS OLD AND SAW SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC WORKERS MASSACRED IN THE ABORTIVE UPRISING OF 1934.

"THE LESSON HE DREW WAS THAT SOCIALISM HAD FAILED; ITS LEADERS WERE INCOMPETENT AND HAD FAILED THE WORKING CLASS, TO CONFRONT FACISM, SOMETHING MORE DRASTIC WAS REQUIRED," THE OBSERVER SAID.

(MORE) IM/RP 1:01P

THIRD ADD LONDON PHILBY X X X SAID.

HE WAS RECRUITED TO COMMUNISM IN VIENNA AFTER THE FIGHTING. BACK IN BRITAIN HE EXPLOITED THE "OLD SCHOOL TIE" NETWORK WHICH HE HATED AND USED IT TO JOIN BRITISH INTELLIGENCE.

HIS RISE WAS SWIFT AND IN 1949 HE WAS SENT AS CHIEF OF BRITISH INTELLIGENCE IN WASHINGTON TO LIAISE AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL.

THE END CAME IN 1961 AND HE DEFECTED TO RUSSIA, WHERE HE WAS REPORTED NOW TO BE HAPPY AND RELAXED.

IM/RP 1:03P